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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 09 SOFIA 001207

SIPDIS

HOMELAND SECURITY PLEASE PASS TO SECRET SERVICE

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SUBJECT: (U) BULGARIAN ORGANIZED CRIME (C-CN5-00054)

REF: A. A. STATE 99125 B. B. SOFIA 1046

Classified By: AMBASSADOR JAMES PARDEW, FOR REASON 1.4(C).

11. (U) This cable is in response to ref A request for information about organized crime in Bulgaria and the Balkans. Where direct sources are  
----- OVERVIEW AND ACTIVITIES -----

12. (SBU) The strength and immunity from the law of organized crime (OC) groups is arguably the most serious problem in Bulgaria today. OC acti

13. (SBU) OC groups are known to be involved in narcotics trafficking, prostitution, extortion and racketeering, various financial crimes, car

14. (SBU) Counterfeit currency -- both U.S. dollar and, increasingly, Euro banknotes -- is produced in Bulgaria and distributed primarily in Fr

15. (C) U.S.-based investigations of transnational crime groups have dismantled significant drug trafficking organizations run by Bulgarian nat

16. (SBU) Other investigations in the U.S. have identified Bulgarian nationals manufacturing and selling false identity documents for use in or

----- WHO'S WHO IN BULGARIAN ORGANIZED CRIME -----

17. (C) Since the fall of Communism in 1989 and the turbulent 1990s, Bulgaria's organized crime scene has undergone major changes, much like th

The up-and-coming star of Bulgarian organized crime, the Varna-based TIM group, is increasingly resembling MULTIGRUP in its successful efforts

1A. (C) TIM -- The New Leader in Bulgarian OC Founded in Varna in 1993, TIM is thought to have been set up by about ten former marines who had

1B. (C) VAI HOLDINGS (formerly VIS and VIS 2) Founded in 1991 by a former wrestler, Vasil Iliev, the group's initial name, VIS, was an acronym VAI has extensive business interests in tourism, finance, entertainment, and manufacturing. It controls JUPITER insurance company, as well as S

1C. (C) INTERGROUP (formerly SIC) KRASIMIR ANDREEV MARINOV (Bulgarian citizen born 6 May 1964, also known as "THE BIG MARGIN"), the group's cu

1D. (C) MULTIGRUP (also known as Multigroup and MG) MG's founder and president, ILIYA PAVLOV (Bulgarian-born, naturalized American citizen bor

1E. (C) UNION OF FORMER COMMANDOS (also known as SPARTAK) ALEXEI ILIEV PETROV (Bulgarian citizen born 23 April 1962) is a former officer in th

1F. (C) NOVE HOLDINGS VASIL KRUMOV BOZHKOV (Bulgarian citizen born 29 July 1956, also known as "THE SKULL") founded his first company in 1990,

1G. (C) DZI (formerly Rosexim Bank) EMIL ALEXANDROV KYULEV (Bulgarian citizen born 5 June 1957) made his fortune through Tourist Sports Bank (

1H. (C) LITEX COMMERCE Again a former wrestler and current member of the Bulgarian Wrestling Federation, GRISHNA DANAELOV[2] GANCHEV (Bulgaria

1I. (C) MIG GROUP (also known as COOL PASS[3]) The MIG GROUP, headed by SLAVCHO PENCHEV BINEV (Bulgarian citizen born 10 December 1965, also k

1J. (C) AMIGOS IVAN TODOROV (Bulgarian citizen born 27 December 1964, also known as "THE DOCTOR") is no longer part of Amigos but still mainta

1K. (C) VUZRASHDANE BUSINESS CLUB VUZRASHDANE Business Club was founded in 2001 jointly by VASIL BOZHKOV (see NOVE HOLDINGS), EMIL KYULEV (see

1L. (C) RUSSIAN INFLUENCE Russia continues to exercise significant influence over the Bulgarian economy through energy imports, including cruc

1M. (C) AKB CORPORATION. The AKB CORPORATION, headed by NIKOLAI YORDANOV BANEV (Bulgarian citizen born 16 August 1959), was involved mainly in

----- POLITICS: THE NEXUS WITH ORGANIZED CRIME -----

18. (C) Organized crime has a corrupting influence on all Bulgarian institutions, including the government, parliament and judiciary. In an att

19. (C) Ahmed Dogan, the leader of the government's junior coalition partner, attended Iliya Pavlov's funeral in 2003, making no attempt to cor

10. (C) Below the level of the national government and the leadership of the major political parties, OC "owns" a number of municipalities and

----- COMMENT -----

11. (C) Despite continuing pressure from the U.S. and the EU, past Bulgarian governments have done little to reduce the presence of organized

PARDEW